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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the way given and new information is conveyed in Korean discourse by applying a taxonomy of given-new information, based on English discourse, to Korean. The taxonomy presumes that information packaging in natural language reflects sender's hypotheses about receiver's assumptions, beliefs, and strategies. Two types of Korean discourse were analyzed using the taxonomy; results were compared with those of the taxonomy's application to English texts. Results generally support the taxonomy and suggest that: (1) maximal use of old entities in discourse is universal regardless of linguistic differences between Korean and English; (2) topic noun phrases (NPs) in Korean Discourse convey the most given information; (3) generic NPs, always occurring with a topic marker in Korean, also convey the most given information; (4) the notion subject in Korean is not equivalent to that of English in terms of information-packing; (5) the same NP shows varying newness/givenness depending on its function in the discourse; (6) when a NP contains other entities, contained NPs are always the same or higher in familiarity than the host entity; (7) unlike English, the title in Korean academic discourse behaves more like an entity than a frame; and (8) different writing types rely on different sizes of discourse entity in delivering information. (MSE)

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An Investigation of Given-New Taxonomy in Korean Discourse

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AN INVESTIGATION OF GIVEN-NEW TAXONOMY IN KOREAN DISCOURSE

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Prince (1981) proposes a taxonomy of given-new information in English discourse based on assumed familiarity. This paper applies Prince's proposal to Korean discourse and investigates the validity of her proposal cross-linguistically. The results of the analysis of two different types of Korean discourse (a written narrative discourse and an academic prose) and the comparison of Korean discourse with English discourse generally support Prince's taxonomy of given-new information and familiarity scale, and lead to the following findings: (1) the maximal use of old entities in discourse seems to be universal regardless of the linguistic differences between Korean and English; (2) topic NP's in Korean discourse convey the most given information; (3) generic NP's which always occur with a topic marker in Korean discourse also convey the most given information; (4) the notion subject in Korean is not equivalent to that of English in terms of information packing, since subjects in Korean often carry new information, which is unusual in English; (5) the same NP shows a different degree of newness or givenness depending on its function in the given discourse; for example, the use of proximal demonstrative gives a NP more newness than distal demonstrative; (6) when a NP contains other entities, the contained NPs are always the same as or higher on the familiarity scale than the host entity; (7) unlike English academic prose, the title in Korean academic discourse behaves more like an entity than a frame; and finally (8) different kinds of writing seem to rely on different sizes of discourse entity in delivering information; thus in academic prose a larger unit of discourse entity such as clausal NP's seems to play a more important role than a small size unit of entity like words.

An Investigation of Given-New Taxonomy in Korean Discourse

0. Introduction

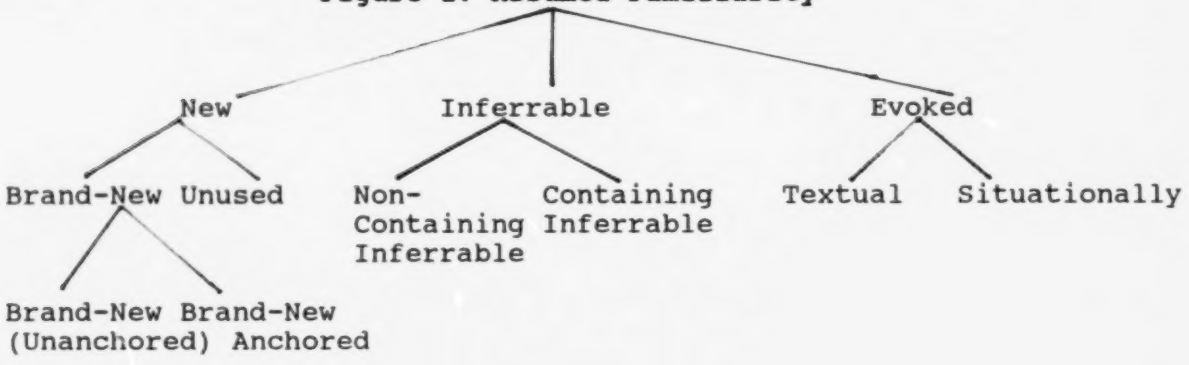
The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the way given-new information is conveyed in Korean discourse. Claiming that information packaging in natural language reflects the sender's hypotheses about the receiver's assumptions, beliefs and strategies, Prince (1981) proposes a taxonomy of given-new information based on English discourse. The present paper is basically an application of Prince's proposal to Korean discourse.

First I will summarize Prince's proposal of the taxonomy of given-new information. Then I will analyze two Korean texts on the basis of Prince's taxonomy and examine whether Prince's proposal fits in Korean discourse or not, by comparing the results of two Korean texts with those of English texts. Finally, I will consider whether the distribution of given-new information interacts with such grammatical categories as topic, subject, or non-subject. By doing this, the present paper pursues the correlation between a taxonomy of linguistic forms and a taxonomy of information types. In addition to the discussion of the three major points, this paper also presents some previously unrecognized characteristics of Korean discourse and raises some questions about Prince's taxonomy.

1. Assumed Familiarity

In her paper titled 'Toward a Taxonomy of a Given-New Information,' Ellen F. Prince (1981) reviews earlier studies on the general notion of given vs. new information and concludes that the notion of givennesss can be best understood in the sense of 'assumed familiarity'. After analyzing two different texts in English, an oral narrative and a written academic text, using NPs as the basic unit of information, Prince argues that the simple dichotomy between given and new information is not enough to explain information packaging in natural languages and proposes further distinctions. Her proposal consists of three major types of information entities: New, Inferrable, and Evoked. Figure 1 shows each type of information entity.

Figure 1. Assumed Familiarity



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Each major type of information entity can be further divided into two subtypes: New into Brand-new and Unused, Inferrable into Non-containing inferrable and Containing inferrable, and Evoked into Textually evoked and Situationally evoked. Brand-new is again further divided into two special entities: Brand-new anchored and Brand-new unanchored. The following sentences include the various types of information entities.

Figure 2: Examples of each type of information entity (Prince, 1981)

a. I bought a beautiful dress. (Brand-New)
b. A rich guy I know bought a Cadillac. (Brand-New Anchored)
c. Rotten Rizzo can't have a third term. (Unused)
d. I went to the post office and the stupid clerk couldn't find a stamp. (Inferrable)
e. Have you heard the incredible claim that the devil speaks English backwards? (Containing Inferrable)
f. Susie went to visit her grandmother and the sweet lady was making Peking Duck. (Evoked)
g. Lucky me just stepped in something. (Situationally Evoked)

When a speaker first introduces an entity into a discourse, it is New (N). For Brand-new (BN) information the hearer has to create a new entity which cannot be identified from the discourse itself. Consider example 1. The reference of the NP 'a beautiful dress' can not be derived from the context at all. Thus it conveys Brand-new information. On the other hand, if the NP representing Brand-new is linked to some other discourse entity, it is Brand-new anchored (BNa). For instance, the Brand-new entity 'A rich guy' in 2 is anchored by the following relative clause 'I know.' Thus it is somewhat more easily processible than Brand-new unanchored. As we can see from the two examples, Brand-new entities in English are usually accompanied by the indefinite article. For Unused (U), the hearer may be assumed to have a corresponding entity in his/her own model and simply has to place it in the discourse-model. Consider example 3. Even though this sentence is the first mention of the proper noun 'Rotten Rizzo' in the discourse, the speaker assumes that the hearer can identify the reference from his/her previous knowledge of the person.

As for an Inferrable (I) entity, the speaker assumes the hearer can infer it, via logical reasoning, from discourse entities already Evoked or from other Inferrables. Consider example 4. The occurrence of the NP 'the stupid clerk' can be inferred from the preceding NP 'the post office' because the hearer has world knowledge to associate 'post office' with 'clerk'. When a NP can be inferred from other NPs properly contained within the NP itself, it is called a Containing inferrable (Ic). Consider example 5. The reference of the NP 'the incredible claim' can be inferred from the following modifying clause 'the devil speaks English backwards.' So it is called a Containing inferrable. The difference between 2-b and 2-e, both of which are modifyed by a relative clause, is marked by the distinctive use of definite vs. indefinite article.

If some NP is uttered, and its entity is thus already in the discourse-model, it is Evoked (E) information. Textually evoked information is information which the hearer evoked earlier, on the textual grounds, by following instructions from the speaker. For example, the NP 'the sweet lady' in example 6 refers to 'Susie' in the previous discourse. Situationally evoked (Es) information is information which the hearer knows to infer all by himself, using extra-textual knowledge of the context. Thus, the hearer can identify the reference of the NP 'me' in sentence 7, because it refers to the speaker him/herself.

Analyzing two English texts and other naturally occurring texts, Prince suggests a preferred hierarchy or scale for what type of entity is used. Figure 3 shows the scale.

Figure 3. Familiarity Scale

E, Es > U > I > Ic > BNa > BN
the most familiar<---------->the least familiar

Evoked entities convey the most given or familiar information, whereas New entities convey the least given information. Thus, the type of information entity is decided by the degree of assumed familiarity between the speaker and the hearer.

Prince explains that the use of a NP representing a certain point on the scale implicates that the speaker could not have referred to the same entity by another NP higher on the scale and emphasizes that the use of the scale must be relative to the speaker's hypothesis about the hearer's belief-set. Thus, Unused is higher on the scale than Inferrable in spite of the fact that most texts contain more Inferrable entities than Unused ones. Prince (p. 245) also proposes the Conservation Principle, saying that, 'since information packaging in natural language reflects the speaker's hypotheses about the hearer's assumptions, the hearer does not like to make new entities when old ones will do, and the speaker forms his/her utterances so as to enable the hearer to make use of old entities.'

2. Text Analysis

Using Prince's taxonomy of given-new information based on 'assumed familiarity', I analyzed two different texts in Korean: a written narrative and a written academic text. The written narrative was published in a women's magazine in Korea designed mainly for adult women. It is a story about a family captured by four runaways for two days and chronologically narrated by the eldest daughter of the family, an eighteen years old girl. The narrator often assumes that the readers have some knowledge of the event because there were quite a few reports about the event on TV, newspapers and magazines before the time of the story.

The written academic text is an article on Korean causatives and passives written by a Korean linguist. It is entitled 'Causatives and Passives'. The writer often mentions previous works on Korean causatives and passives, and assumes that the readers have knowledge of these previous works.

Comparing the results of the analysis of English texts by

Prince with those of Korean texts, this paper attempts to answer three major questions concerning information packaging: First, do the Korean texts also observe the Conservation Principle in the way English texts do? Second, how does Korean grammar interact with the various types of information entities? For example, Korean makes topic NPs differently from subject NPs, whereas in English subject NPs tend to be topics. What type of information do topic NPs in Korean usually carry? Finally, what is the nature of subject in Korean? In other words, do Korean subject NPs, separated from topic NPs, behave the same way as English subject NPs do in terms of information packaging?

The overall pattern of the occurrence of each type of entity supports the Familiarity Scale and the Conservation Principle. Compare the total occurrence of each major type of information entities in Korean texts in Table 1 with that in English texts in Table 2. We can see a general tendency that each text utilizes relatively familiar information more frequently than new information, since both texts in both languages activate New entities the least.

Table 1

Total Occurrence of Each Type of Information Entities in the Two Korean Texts

	Written Narrative (%)	Written Academic (%)
Evoked	70 (51.5 %)	22 (43.1 %)
Inferrable	61 (44.8 %)	25 (49.0 %)
New	5 (3.7%)	4 (7.9 %)

Table 2

Total Occurrence of Each Type of Information Entities in the Two English Texts (Prince, 1981)

	Oral Narrative (%)	Written Academic (%)
Evoked	92 (77.3 %)	8 (28.6 %)
Inferrable	13 (15.1 %)	15 (53.6 %)
New	9 (7.6 %)	5 (17.8 %)

This proves the Conservation Principle that the hearer does not like to make new entities when old ones will do, and the speaker forms his/her utterances so as to enable the hearer to make maximal use of old entities. However, compared to the result of the Korean written narrative and the English oral narrative, the result of the Korean academic text and the English academic text shows reversed frequency between Evoked and Inferrable entities: the frequency of Inferrable entities is higher than that of Evoked entities. This seems to have something to do with the size of the entities. Prince points out that the greatest difficulty for the linguist analyzing texts like the written one is the sheer size of the entities. Compared to the English oral

narrative and the Korean written narrative, both the Korean academic text and the English academic text have a relatively high frequency of Containing Inferrables, whose size is much larger than that of other types of entities, and those Containing inferrables contain quite a few Evoked entities which are not counted. The English oral narrative does not use Containing inferrables at all, and although the Korean written narrative uses some Containing inferrables, the ratio is much lower than the English and Korean academic texts. This seems to tell us that different styles of discourse make use of different types of information entities. In other words, the more formal and abstract the text is, the more Containing inferrables are used to convey information. Thus, the Conservation Principle does not operate in an absolute mode, but rather a relative mode. That is, it is always true that the frequency of New entities is the lowest in any type of text. However, the frequency of Evoked entities, Inferrrables and Containing inferrables, which convey more given information than New entities do, depends on the type of text.

In the analysis of English texts, Prince divides NPs into two grammatical categories: subjects vs. nonsubjects. However, I divide NPs into three categories (topics, subjects, nonsubjects), because, unlike English, Korean has a topic category separate from the subject category. Thus, Korean is said to be both a topic-prominent and a subject-prominent language, whereas English is a subject-prominent language (Li and Thompson, 1976). Topics and subjects in Korean are marked by distinctive particles and topics are usually considered to convey given information since they are often mentioned previously. The results of the analysis of the two Korean texts on Table 3 and 4 show that all the topic NPs convey Evoked information.

Table 3
Analysis of Topics, Subjects, and Nonsubjects in Korean Written Narrative

	Topics (%)	Subjects (%)	Nonsubjects (%)	Total (%)
Evoked				
E	15	25	27	
Es	2		1	
Subtotal	17(12.6%)	25(18.5%)	28(20.7%)	70(51.8%)
Inferrable				
I		12	37	
Ic			11	
Subtotal		12(8.9%)	48(35.6%)	60(44.5%)
New				
U		4		
BNa				
BN		1		
Subtotal		5(3.7%)		5(3.7%)
Total				135(100%)

Table 4

Analysis of Topics, Subjects, and Nonsubjects in Korean Academic Prose

	Topics(%)	Subjects(%)	Nonsubjects(%)	Total(%)
Evoked				
E	8	5	8	
Es	1			
Subtotal	9(17.6%)	5(9.8%)	8(15.7%)	22(43.1%)
Inferrable				
I		1	3	
Ic		4	17	
Subtotal		5(9.8%)	20(39.2%)	25(49.0%)
New				
U				
BNa			4	
Subtotal			4(7.9%)	4(7.9%)
Total				51(100%)

This perfectly fits into our assumption that topic NPs usually convey given information, for Evoked entities are the highest on the Familiarity Scale. All except two of the topic NPs in the Korean written narrative are mentioned previously. The two NPs which are not mentioned previously convey Situationally evoked information: one refers to the writer herself and the other to the earlier reports about the story. Consider sentences 8-a and 8-b.

8-a. kuri kilci anin salm-il sal-ass-ciman,
such long not life-OM live-Past-although

'Although (I) haven't lived such a long life,'

amato na-nin olhay sipwuel sipoil-kwa sipywukil,
perhaps I-TM this year october fifteenth-and sixteenth

itul-tongan wuri-cip-eyse ilena-ss-ten
two days-for my-house-at happen-Past-Rel

i chwungkyekcekin il-ul ic-elswunin upselcito-morunta.
this shocking event-OM forget-can not may-not know

'I may not be able to forget this shocking event which happened to us this year October 15th and 16th.'

8-b i pwupwun-eyse-nin imi pototwen-kes-in hwaksilhi
this part-in-Contr already reported-thing-TM definitely

calmos cenhaycin kes-ita.
wrong delivered thing-is

'At this part (of the story), the earlier reports were wrong.'

The fact that the NP 'I' in 8-a is marked as a topic in its first mention is easy to understand, for it refers to the narrator herself. However, the fact that the NP 'the earlier reports' in 8-b is marked as a topic in its first occurrence needs to be explained. There is no explicit explanation of the earlier reports in the previous discourse of the story. Nonetheless, the writer presupposes that the readers have read the earlier reports about the event. The writer reports the event one week after it ended, and, in the meantime, there seem to have been quite a few reports about the event. This confirms Prince's caution that the Familiarity Scale (Figure 3) must be relative to the speaker's hypothesis about the hearer's belief-set. The writer in the Korean written narrative hypothesizes the readers' high degree of familiarity of 'the earlier reports' by introducing it with a topic marker. It is possible that the readers are not familiar with the earlier reports at all. Nevertheless, they are enforced to accept the existence of earlier reports by being triggered by the writer's use of the topic marker. Since the earlier reports are directly related to the present story, it is easy for the readers to add the existence of the earlier reports to their belief system of the present story. This shows that using one grammatical form over another is a way of getting the writer's hypothesis across to the readers.

Prince points out that in the English texts nearly all of the subjects are Evoked and none of the subjects are New. However, the Korean written narrative shows a somewhat different result: some of the subjects convey new information (See Table 3). This reveals that Korean subjects are not equivalent to those of English. Since Korean makes a distinction between topic NPs and subject NPs, it is plausible that Korean subjects would tend to convey new information more frequently than English subjects which usually function as topics in discourse. Therefore, when both a topic NP and a subject NP occur in the same clause, the topic NP tends to convey more given information than the subject NP. However, the behavior of the subject in English and Korean is not completely different, because not all of the New entities are Brand-New. Only one is BN. The rest are Unused entities, referring to the names of the four runaways who attacked the narrator's family. Consider the following sentence with the BN entity. Even this NP seems to be subject by default.

9-a. cip-ey tulesse-ca mun-ap-ey
house-at enter-as door-front-in

'When (I) came back home, in front of the door...'

9-b. twu myung-uy nahsen namca-til-i nwun-ey ttuy-ess-ko
two N.Cl-Poss unfamiliar men-Pl-SM eye-to Pass-Past-and

('Two strangers were seen to my eyes and...)
'(I) saw <u>two strangers</u>, and...'

The main clause 9-b. is passive. But the function of the passive verb in this sentence is different from other prototypical passive constructions in Korean which usually have an explicit agent on the surface. Here, passive is used to defocus the agent (Shibatani, 1985). The existence of the agent in this sentence is obvious because it is the writer herself, and thus it does not appear on the surface. It seems that the BN entity happens to be subject by default resulted from the agent defocusing process. However, regardless of the grammatical process, the fact that the BN entity occurs with a subject marker in Korean discourse tells us that the nature of subject in Korean does not exactly overlap with that in English.

Except for the BN entity mentioned above, the other N entities are U and they are Proper nouns. Even though Prince categorizes U including Proper nouns under N, they are often much more familiar than other types of N entities, depending on the nature of the text and the hearer's knowledge of the content of the text. This might be the reason why Prince ranks U next to E on the Familiarity Scale, saying that the use of the Familiarity Scale must be relative to the speaker's hypotheses about the hearer's belief-set. In the sense that U entities are first introduced into the text, they are N. But speaking of their familiarity in the given context, they often convey more given information than N or even I entities. In this regard, we do not have to classify U under N any more.

There is another piece of evidence that U is more given than N or I. In both texts of both languages I found that on the Familiarity Scale NPs contained in Containing Inferrables are in general the same as or higher than the host NPs. In other words, contained NPs in Containing Inferrables are either E, I, or U. All the containing NPs both in English and Korean texts show the same result. This implies that U is not new entity.

Another interesting finding is the total occurrence of NPs in subject position. Prince's analysis of the English texts shows that the occurrence of subject NPs is higher than that of non-subject NPs. However, in the Korean texts the combined occurrence of both topic NPs and subject NPs is lower than that of non-subject NPs. This is because Korean is a zero-anaphora language. Anaphoric pronouns are often omitted in Korean discourse unless they have a specific function in the given text, and those anaphoric pronouns usually occur in subject position. This means that quite a few E entities in subject position are omitted. This is especially true in informal oral discourse.

The analysis of the Korean texts also reveals that the degree of givenness delivered by the same type of information entity is not always the same. Some of the I entities in the Korean texts seem to be newer than others. For example, consider the underlined NP in the following sentence.

10. i chwungkyekcekin il-ul ic-elswu-nin ups-elcito-morunta
this shocking event-OM forget-be able to not-may-not-know

'I may not be able to forget **this** shocking event.'

The use of a determiner (the demonstrative 'this') implies that the NP is somewhat given, since demonstratives are typically used to point a referent based on the speaker's/writer's assumption that it can be easily located by the listener/reader. But there seems to be some difference in the degree of givenness depending on what kind of determiner is used. Wald (1983) and Lakoff (1974) describe 'new this' in English which introduces BN information into the discourse. Korean does not have 'new this', but the use of the proximal demonstrative 'i' (this), instead of the distal demonstrative 'ku' (that) seems to provide the NP with a higher degree of newness. Furthermore, the NP 'this shocking event' occurs in the first sentence of the discourse. The use of the demonstrative 'this' seems to highlight the contribution of this NP to the development of the story. In fact, the rest of the discourse gives detailed information about 'this shocking event'. By using 'this' instead of 'that', which is grammatical but does not sound natural in this context, the writer seems to provide this NP with a higher degree of communicative dynamism. Firbas (1966, p.270) says that

> By the degree of Communicative Dynamism carried by a sentence element we understand the extent to which the sentence element contributes to the development of the communication, to which it 'pushes the communication forward', as it were. It is obvious that elements conveying new, unknown information show higher degree of CD than elements conveying known information.

In terms of Firbas's explanation of the relationship between CD and the type of information, the Korean NP seems to have a high degree of communicative dynamism due to the use of the proximal demonstrative 'this'. This example shows that, in addition to topic and subject, demonstratives are another type of linguistic form which interacts with the degree of givenness.

The analysis of the Korean texts shows that generic NPs convey a high degree of given information. One of the generic NPs in the Korean academic article occurs with a topic marker in the first mention. Consider the following sentence.

11. inkan-in sahweycekin tongmwul-ira-ko hanin kyenci-eyse...
Man-TM social animal-is-Comp view-from

'From the point of view that man is a social animal...'

The generic NP 'inkan' (Man) occurs with a topic marker. From the fact that all the topic NPs convey E information, we may assume that the generic NP 'Man' also conveys E information. This is syntactic evidence that generics convey highly given information.

One more point I would like to mention is the importance of the title in the Korean academic article. Prince remarks that titles tend to serve the frame of the discourse, not for the addition of entities and attributes to a discourse-model. However, in the Korean academic article, the title behaves more like an entity, not a frame. Consider the following sentence.

12. a. satong-kwa phitong (title)
Causative-and Passive

'Causatives and Passives"

b. kwuke-uy satong-ekan-kwa phitong-ekan-in
Korean-Poss causative-morpheme-and passive-morpheme-TM

meyhkacicem-eyse sangwui-wa hamkkey sangi-to
some ways-in difference-and as well as similarity-also

'Despite that Korean causatives and passives show similarities as well as differences in some ways...'

The two NPs 'Causatives' and 'Passives' in the title (12-a) occur in the first sentence of the text with a topic marker (12-b). This means that the two NPs are already Evoked in the text. As we have seen from the analysis of the two Korean texts, topic NPs do not appear unless they are previously mentiond or Situationally evoked.

3. Conclusions

This paper has investigated some aspects of information packaging in Korean with reference to English. The results of the analysis of two Korean texts and the comparison of Korean discourse with English discourse generally support Prince's taxonomy of given-new information and the familiarity scale, and lead to the following findings:

1. The maximal use of old entities in discourse holds for both languages in spite of the structural differences between English and Korean.
2. Topic NPs in Korean convey the most given information.
3. As one would expect from the fact that Korean has a topic NP category separate from the subject NP, the notion subject in Korean is not completely equivalent to that of English in terms of information packaging, since subjects in Korean sometimes carry new information, which is unusual in English.
4. The same noun shows a different degree of newness or givenness depending on its function in the given discourse; for example, the use of a proximal demonstrative gives a NP more newness than a distal demonstrative.
5. When a NP contains other entities, the contained NPs are typically the same as or higher on the familiarity scale than the host entity: this is a piece of evidence supporting the claim that U entities convey more given information than N or I enti-

ties because they are often contained in Containing inferrables.

6. Generic NPs, which often occur with a topic marker in their first occurrence in Korean discourse, seem to convey a high degree of given information.

7. Unlike English academic texts, the title in Korean academic texts behaves more like an entity than a frame.

In addition to the findings summarized above, this study also raises some issues requiring further studies on the nature of information packaging in natural languages:

1. As is already noticed by Prince herself, it is very difficult to decide the sheer size of each information type. There should be more systematic studies on the validity of the size of each information type and its relationship to the type of discourse.

2. Prince used NPs only as the basic unit of information. However, it has been noticed that other parts of speech (e.g. verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc.) play equally important roles in information packaging (Bardovi-Harlig, 1983). It is recommended that further studies should describe how various parts of speech interact with each other and how the interactional conspiracy can be explained in a unified way.

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